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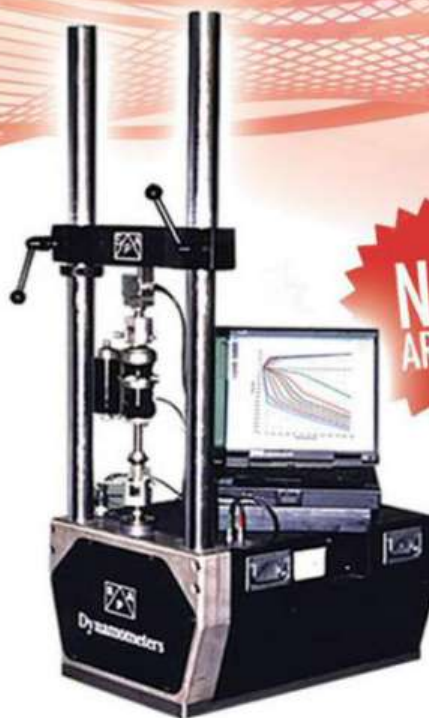
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MAIN MENU



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Fastfours & Rotaries

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78



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DARREN PEIRCE OF ROTARY ENTHUSIASTS INTERNATIONAL

Hi, my name is Darren. For a couple of years my friends and family were saying to me 'you should do something with all the rotary stuff!'. I've been surrounded and consumed by the rotary scene since the 1980s. Mostly, I would post on other pages and try to draw in good conversation among the other people who were also just keen to talk about rotaries.

For me, I was getting a bit sick of the trawlers, just looking for an argument about someone else's car? There was no admin to control any of them properly, so it would generally end up in a huge fight. I was used to being on the Ausrotary web page which was policed, as well as it could be, and the most recognised rotary page for many years.

One Friday night I was doing the usual and looking at rotaries and my wife said, 'why don't you start a page now?'. Already with a couple of Turkeys under the belt (as you do!), I thought 'yep, it's now or never!'. Firstly I didn't want the page to be open, as it would be too much work to police. Then I wanted a name that would appeal to all ages around the world. I wanted to see as much as I could first-hand and be able to give the real enthusiasts something interesting to stay and talk about.

It was important from the beginning to have all enthusiasts be able to have an opinion and know they weren't just there for argument's sake. I wanted people to have plenty of vids and pics to keep the interest high. The name Rotary Enthusiasts International was something that would explain the type of person I wanted to share it with.

I wanted to have another admin just to help me watch what was happening. The first of now eight

admins was Andre (BABYRX). We were always talking and got along great – he seemed pretty happy when I asked him to join. So it was started from that Friday night, about 14 months ago.

Within six weeks we had four admins and were just about to have our first event. We wanted it to be something where people would enjoy a cruise to the location, park up, get a good feed, relax and talk rotaries. We would usually talk most days to these people, without ever meeting up, so this was the perfect opportunity to really get to know our rotor friends. My goal was to bring everyone together and meet face to face.

So we have ended up with a good community that can share pics, information, advice and general good conversation without any of what I saw on the other pages previously. Our first event was a success with around 60 cars attending. Thankfully it was a really great day and the page has grown steadily ever since. We spent the day just eating and talking, while being surrounded by 60-odd pretty insane rotaries!

We had about 900 members at that point, 10 weeks later we had 3000+ and another couple of mates had joined the admin team. I need to have knowledgeable guys that most people know and all get along well with each other. These guys are all great blokes that keep the page clean collectively. Now 14 months from when we started, we have had half a dozen events, offered a small production run of personalised shirts, logo stickers and calendars.

It's been a great first year for REI, now having eight admins and almost 7000 members. With first-hand information and advice for basically anything, the page

is kept active 24 hours around the clock, every day of the week. Anything you want to know can be found out at the drop of a hat and with a smile.

With the increasing success of the page, we are confident we are going to have many more exciting things to come in the future. But most importantly, REI will have all the new cars, events, advice and up to date information every day. I would like to thank the REI boys: BABY, HASHY, GEEK, Bill, Dave, Jono, Buggy and Craig for being top blokes, and of course all the members for making it what it is.



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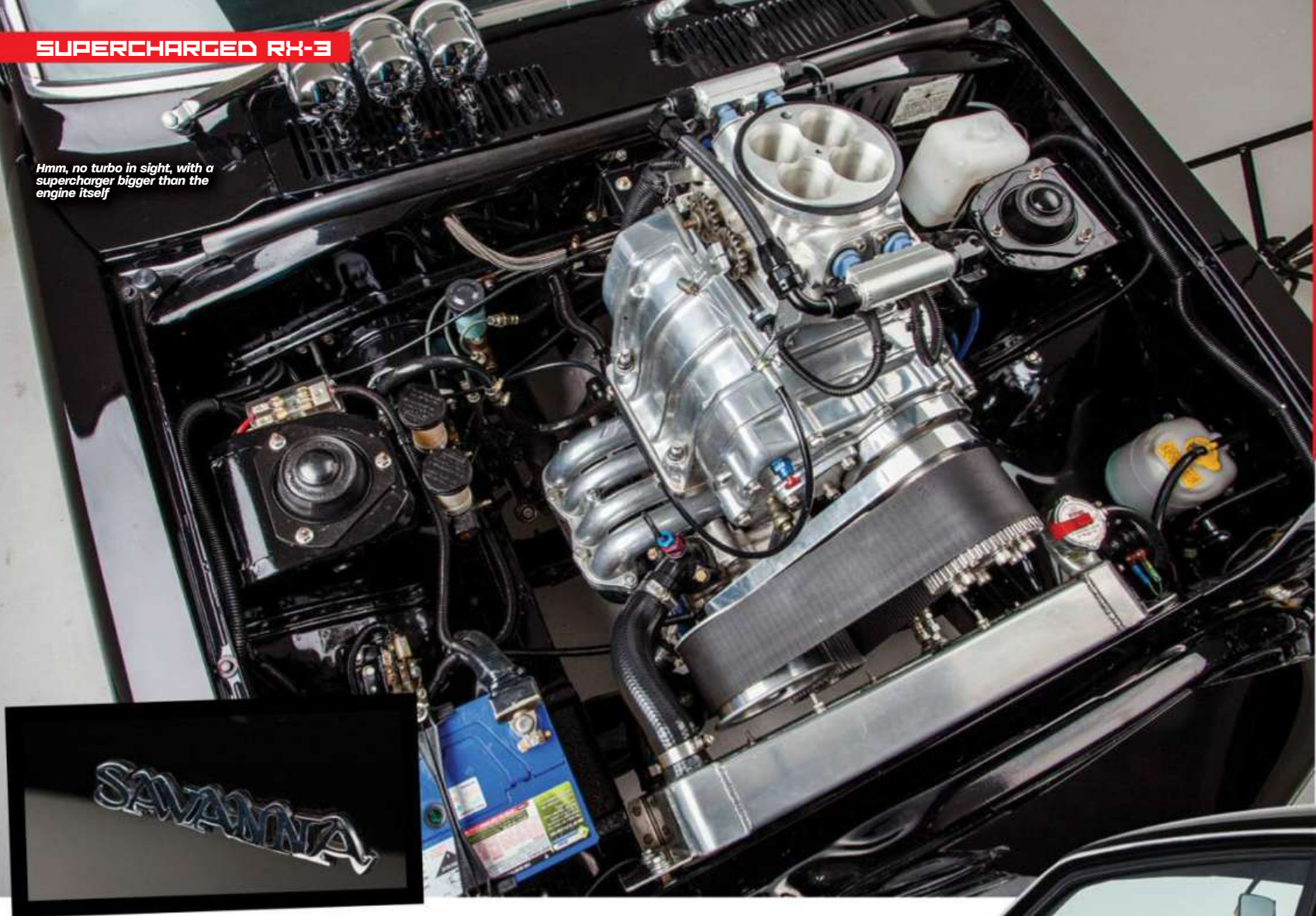


PHOTOGRAPHY BY ERIC TANG

GET BLOWN AWAY

**IT'S NOT EVERY DAY YOU FIND
AN RX-3 WITH A GIANT BLOWER
POPPING UP FROM THE BONNET**

Hmm, no turbo in sight, with a supercharger bigger than the engine itself



It's easy to say you've seen it all when it comes to RX-3s. They all tend to tread the same turbo-and-Simmons route with the same bright Kandy paintjobs and breakfast-spread trim. Goran Mazevski (32, truckie) didn't want to build one of these carbon copies. He wanted to stand out, and rightfully so. From the very first time you take in his front end, you can tell there is something very unique about his 1974 RX-3.

Says Goran, "I've loved rotors ever since I was five years old. I built this to be just a weekend cruiser." Goran's actually owned the RX-3 for going on seven years now. He's built it from the ground up to be something different and unique, and has since poured in \$60,000 from his own pocket to get there. Suffice to say, we think he's reached his destination.

"The car is not your normal RX-3 with Simmons FRs and a turbo set-up. I built it the way it is just to be different. People were giving me crap about the blower not running. Well, you know what? It runs perfect."

"The car took me four years to build. It's been a rocky road along the way, especially losing my father." Thankfully, Goran has been surrounded by passionate industry professionals, including Mike Mortimer at Rotorsport who looked after the engine build with Bill Nabhan at Mazsport doing the tuning. Con at Diff Technics handled the diff. Blasting was by Austech and all rust repairs via Simply Mazda's Simon Wilson. It's an A-team, that's for sure.

As Goran has grown up with 13Bs, the 12A was done away with, but unlike most, our man did not tread the turbo route, favouring torque and response instead via a unique supercharger set-up you never see on a rotor like this.





**THE CAR IS NOT YOUR NORMAL RX-3 WITH
SIMMONS FRS AND A TURBO SET-UP. I BUILT
IT THE WAY IT IS JUST TO BE DIFFERENT**



The blower is actually a perfect choice, offering all the instant, low-end torque that rotors lack inherently. The positive-displacement nature of the set-up also means that beautiful whine and the solid kick you get just like the old-school musclers of Summernats gone by.

The look is indulgent Cherry Black thanks to Justin Favette at Just Customs Bodyworks. "It looks sick," Goran says. "With the blower it just looks crazy." He goes on to say that the work performed has literally saved this car's life, bringing it back from the rubbish pile into a gleaming hat-tip to a rotor classic.

Also different is the interior. There is no tan trim to be seen here, nor custom buckets and dashes. It's all factory and genuine. The only exception is a single gauge to match the trio on the bonnet... provided you can pull your eyes away from the blower.

Prior to this, Goran had another RX-3 PP. His love of rotors is strong, and finally, here, he reckons he's managed to create something that not only stands out, but has the balls to take on the strip and circuit and everything in-between.

Going on, Goran is hoping to hand this car down to his kids. "I will never sell it. You can't put a pricetag on it." Sure beats a box of coins...

No Simmons either? Blasphemy!



**WITH THE BLOWER IT
JUST LOOKS CRAZY**







There are no Yo Gabba Gabba-themed colours in here. It's classic black and factory bar the boost gauge



**I'VE LOVED ROTORS
EVER SINCE I WAS
FIVE YEARS OLD**

Thanks: "A special thanks to my mum for everything, RIP Dad 'always loved, never forgotten', my fiancée Belinda for putting up with everything along the way, brother Tony Mazeveski for the helping hand in mechanical bolt-up from the motor to the diff and all the trim work, Mike Mortimer for the

tough little Rotorsport 13B, Con at Diff Technics for the ass end, Bill Nabhan from Mazsport for the tune, Steven Nikolovski for the cut-out and fab work on the bonnet and panelwork, Simon Wilson Rust Repairs, Justin Fauvette at Just Custom Bodyworks, Stephen Odisho (RXCOOL)." ■

SPECS

ENGINE:

13B Series V

PERFORMANCE:

300rwhp

ENGINE HARDWARE:

Series V housings, e-shaft, and rotors, 3mm apex seals, Competition stationary gears, dowelled, high-volume oil pump, Series V water pump, 2.5in steam-pipe headers, twin 2.5in pipes with custom 3in collector, resonators and 3in Rotaflow muffler, Holley Dominator fuel 1800 supply pump and Black Dominator 150 pre (E85 compatible), Microtech MTX8 engine management system and sequential fire ignition system, GM 371 supercharger, Injection Perfection injectors, PWR radiator and oil cooler, custom intake manifold

DRIVETRAIN:

RX-7 Series V gearbox, 1.2T brass-button clutch, 9in Diff Technics full spool (4.8), 31-spline billet axles

SUSPENSION/BRAKES:

Pedders coil-overs and 24mm swaybar front, leaf rear with Pedders shocks, 330mm front rotors with twin-spot calipers, Nissan Patrol master cylinder, VN brakes rear, Bendix brake pads all around

BODYWORK:

Cherry Black

INTERIOR:

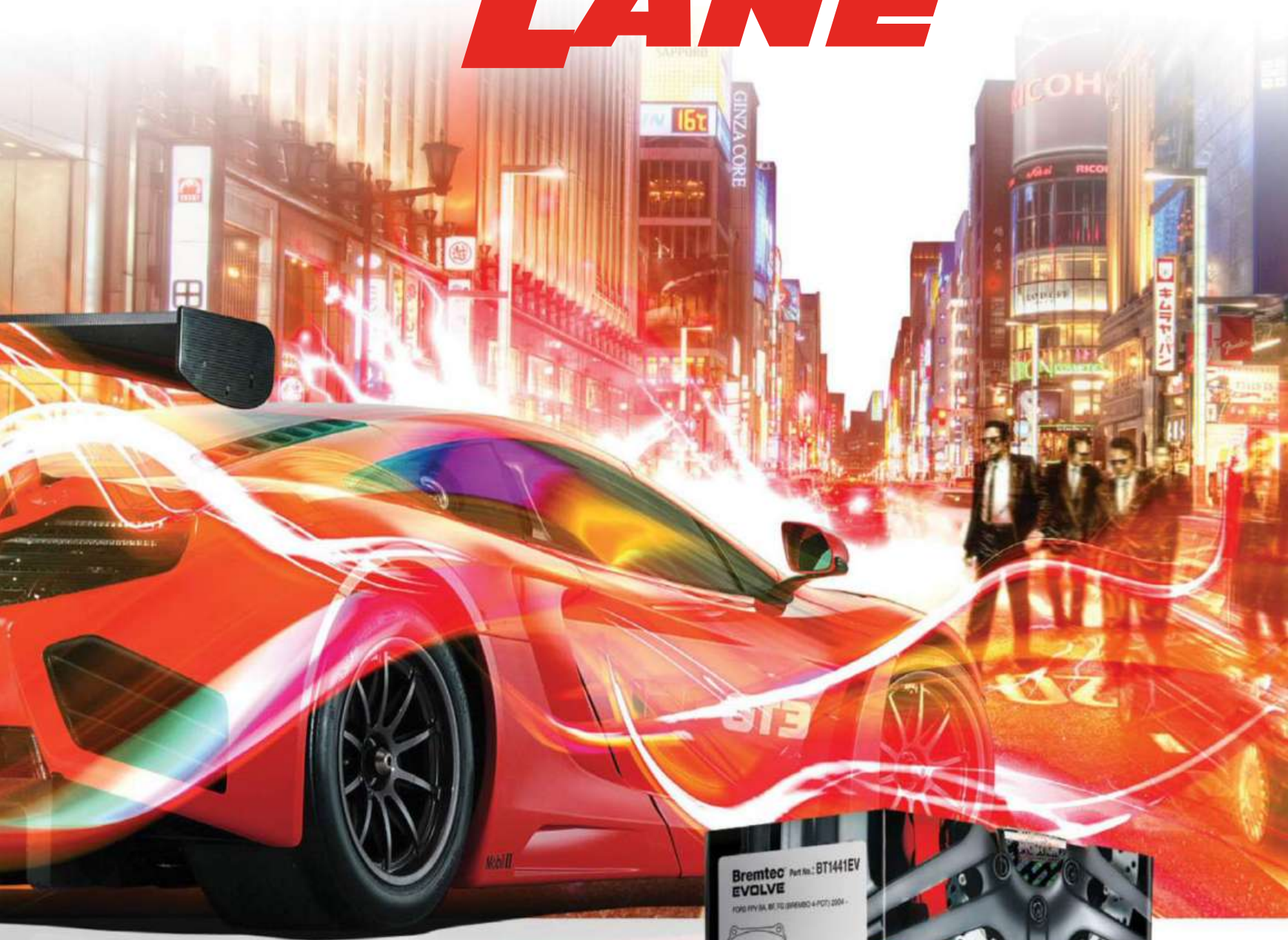
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ALEX'S MK2 ESCORT BUILD

ALEX IS BUILDING ONE KILLER ESKY

I have always been a fan of Escorts, as my dad has always had a Mk1 Escort 4-door for as long as I can remember, and I would always help him tinker on it in the shed (still do). When I was becoming old enough to get my L's I wanted to get a Mk1 2-door, but we could never find a good example with minimal rust that was reasonably priced, so instead I settled for a 1986 GN Sigma of all things.

A few years ago we came across this car. It had some front end damage, but apart from that it was relatively rust free. Although it was a Mk2 and not a Mk1, and a four-door, it already had a factory 2L Pinto motor, which is what I wanted. Apart from the front end damage, it had minimal rust, so we bought it.

Originally the plan was to fix the front end damage and get the car running and then we were going to turbocharge the Pinto with EFI and build it as a street car. A friend through the Small Ford Car Club had put up his spare YB Cosworth cylinder head for sale, and it was at a reasonable price so I jumped on it.

Once I had the cylinder head and found a YB Cosworth block, the whole plan for the car changed into what the car is currently being built as. Being a bit of a fan of sport compact drag racing, I decided to build it as a street/drag car. First thing I had to do was to build the rear end, and as the car was going to be more of a drag car than street car it had to be strong. It now has a shortened 8-inch Borg Warner diff with billet 31-spline Strange axles, 4.11 gears and a Harrop TrueTrac and Skyline R31 disc brakes. We also tubbed the car to fit 235/60/15 Mickey Thompson ET Street Radials and Weld Racing Pro Stars. We also got a custom drop tank made for the car as the old one was just too damaged.

Once all that was done, we moved onto the front end and upgraded the front brakes with a Hoppers Stoppers big brake kit and 5-stud hub conversion, everything bolted straight on, and a set of 4-inch Weld Racing Pro stars to give the car a tough drag car stance. The engine is currently at Mr 2600 Racing getting built, we have gone from using the factory Garrett T3 turbo to a Precision 6266 turbo, overall the engine will be serviced and freshened up, I'm hoping to get 400+hp at the tyres when it's done. Being that the car was originally an automatic, it made it easy to fit a Falcon T5 5-speed gearbox with no extra cutting.

A big thanks to my dad for helping me every step of the way, couldn't do it without him, and Paul Testa at Mr 2600 Racing for all the fab work he's done and building the engine. The car still has a long way to go but it will all be worth it in the end.





ADAM'S RX-3

NAME: ADAM HARPER

VEHICLE: MAZDA 808/RX-3

WHY THIS PARTICULAR VEHICLE?

I have loved rotors since I first started buying FFNR when I was 15. I have wanted to build one ever since. Nothing beats the sound and smell of a cranky rotor. The RX-3 in my opinion is the ultimate rotor.

WHAT DID YOU BUILD THE CAR TO DO?

To be an all-rounder. I wanted a car that I could cruise whenever I wanted, take it to the Creek on Wednesday and run a number, take it to the circuit and run decent times, and to hold its own at car shows. To build something a little different to the average RX-3 with some throwbacks to '90s styling but with modern performance.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU OWNED IT?

Five years.

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT IT?

The total extreme reactions you get when driving it. People either love it or hate it. The haters are usually driving Camrys.

PREVIOUS VEHICLES?

'75 RX-4 coupe, TE Gemini, TG Gemini Panelvan, Hilux minitruck, SS Commodore ute.

ESTIMATED TIME AND COST?

I stopped counting.

CAR'S FUTURE?

To enjoy it and to flog the sh*t out of it any chance I get.





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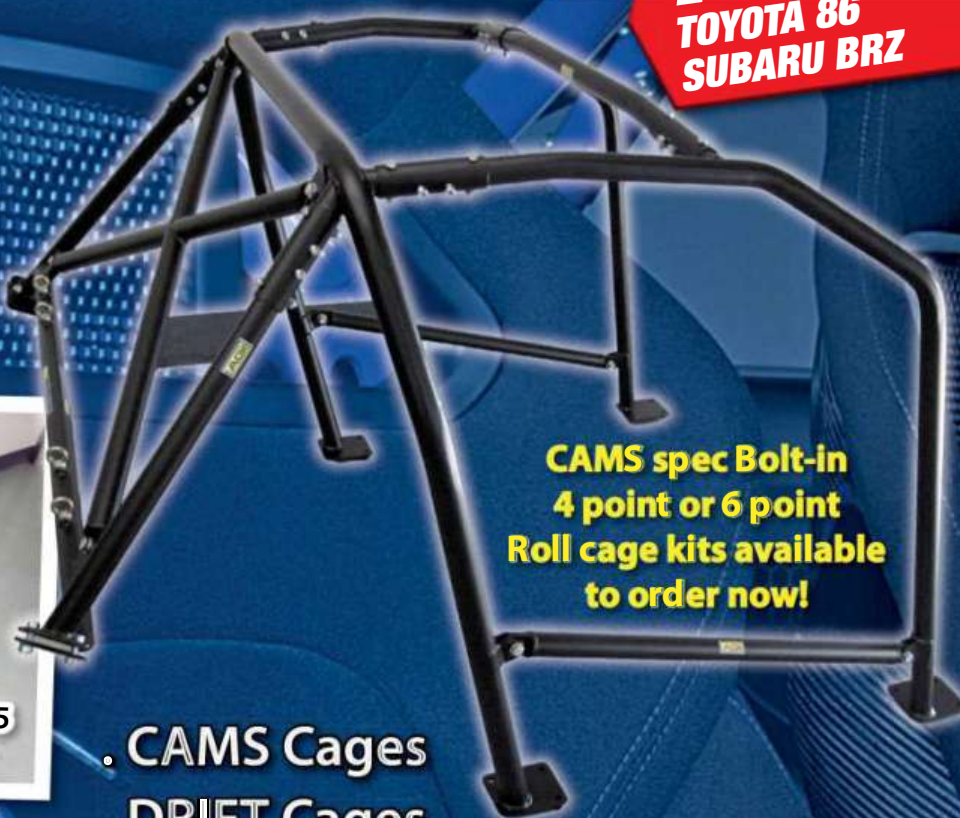
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THIRTY ROCK

**BIG BOOST AND BIG PLANS, HERE'S ONE
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PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANIEL SHARP



Twenty-one-year-old Oliver Arndt clearly likes to wind up the wick. His S15 not only looks the biz but is pumping through a massive 30psi on a largely unopened SR. It's probably a case of when, not if, the ol' gal blows, but for now Oliver's enjoying the ride.

Says Oliver, "I have always loved S15s ever since I was a kid. The styling to me was exactly what I wanted to modify off. I didn't originally plan to build the car for a certain purpose. I just wanted a fun daily, but as the build progresses I cannot help but feel it is slowly becoming a drift car."

Originally Oliver flew himself and a mate down to Sydney to buy the car. "I wanted the car, though second-hand, to be new to Brisbane to avoid the dreaded 'Oh, my mate used to own this and guess what he used to do in it?'" The previous owner had spent a decent amount of money on a twin-plate clutch and the single-mass lightweight bellhousing popped out, causing a lot of coolant to spill onto the clutch and destroy it. I also had a lapse of judgement in buying a Chinese spaghetti manifold to help accommodate the level of boost. It only lasted the second 2bar pull before it cracked, which then led to a complete engine bay overhaul by MDS Fab."

It's hard to believe Oliver has owned the 200SX just over a year. His SR5 HiLux and Lexus LS400 prior to this were fun in their own way, but nothing beats monster boost — what Oliver says makes and breaks a car.



The Ice White Pearl is actually a respray thanks to the average work in place prior





**I JUST WANTED A FUN
DAILY, BUT AS THE BUILD
PROGRESSES I CAN'T HELP
BUT FEEL IT IS SLOWLY
BECOMING A DRIFT CAR**



THE BEST THING ABOUT THE CAR I'D SAY IS ALSO THE WORST: THE 30PSI OF BOOST. THE FEELING AND NOISE OF 30PSI IS AMAZING



"The best thing about the car I'd say is also the worst: the 30psi of boost. The feeling and noise of 30psi is amazing, but the motor itself isn't built for it yet, so the days for this SR20 are numbered.

"Lightweight, cheap for parts and relatively good on fuel," the SR20 was a natural choice to leave in place and hammer with boost. What would not cop the extra power was the gearbox, now replaced with a rock-solid RB25 unit thanks to the convertor bellhousing.

"The paint was originally unmatched, and the tub was done questionably, so things were cleaned up and reinforced, and a closed-door paintjob done to

make sure the paint matched as well. I've managed to build the car in a year. The cost of the build is something I've never been game enough to add up properly, but I've estimated it to be around \$30-40,000."

Looking back, however, Oliver doesn't believe he'd do anything differently and looks forward to what he's planning next, which includes a forged motor, brake upgrade, interior and boot paint in Pearl Ice White, wheels painted to match the car, Defi gauges and more.





The custom cage by MDS has an eye to quick times when the S15 hits the quarter

SPECS

ENGINE: 2L SR20DET four-cylinder turbo

PERFORMANCE: 420rwhp (United E85 + VP M2 additive)

ENGINE HARDWARE: Brian Crower Stage II 264deg camshafts, Tomei baffled sump, Walbro 460 fuel pump, 1250cc bottom-feed injectors, 5128 Precision turbocharger, Hybrid intercooler, triple-core aluminium radiator, 3in stainless to twin 3in blast pipes with resonator, SplitFire coil packs, A'PEXi Power FC engine management system, GReddy Profec boost controller

DRIVETRAIN: RB25DET five-speed gearbox, Exedy heavy-duty clutch with lightweight flywheel, Nismo two-way diff (4.11)

BRAKES/SUSPENSION: GReddy braces front and rear, BC coil-overs, factory brakes

WHEELS/TYRES: CST Hyper Zero 18x9.5in +15 wheels all around

BODYWORK: D-Max boot spoiler, Integra DC2 front lip, HID lights, Ganador mirrors, LED taillights, pumped rear fenders, mini-tubbed rear

INTERIOR: Bride seats, stripped rear seat, interior metalwork painted to match exterior, four-point custom MDS Fab roll cage, Alpine head unit, Type S splits and rears, sub and amp in boot



I HAD A LAPSE OF JUDGEMENT IN BUYING A CHINESE SPAGHETTI MANIFOLD TO HELP ACCOMMODATE THE LEVEL OF BOOST. IT ONLY LASTED THE SECOND 2BAR PULL BEFORE IT CRACKED





The SR remains only with new sticks, but when it does go pop Oliver will build up a forged motor to match



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THE BIG O





**IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN A HASSLE TO GET
HERE, BUT THIS ONE-OF-A-KIND DATTO
WAS WELL WORTH THE DRAMA**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY WWW.AUTOSHOTZ.COM.AU

Andrew Knights (46) is a mechanic, a very dangerous occupation for a car-lover. He's a big Datto fan, but he always wanted something a little different to most. We've seen many Dattos through these pages of late, but we can guarantee you haven't seen one quite like this...

Says Andrew, "I had a four-door Australian-spec 1600 and got to the point where I needed to spend a lot of money to get it to the next level or to get something else. So, I started looking for a two-door coupe but came across this in Los Angeles and had to have it."

Andrew's owned the two-door for two years. It took five months to get import approval, arrange for payment and freight from the US, but it's been worth the headache. "The car is an all-rounder. It goes well, handles and stops, and is still great to drive on the road. I like everything about the car, but the best thing would be that it's quite rare in Australia and the reaction it gets from people."

In Andrew's former mix are a few 1600s, a Stanza SSS and an S15 Pulsar SSS. The Datto was already modified, but it did need a lot of work. "The car was built about 12 years ago and had a lot of money spent on it. You get what you pay for."



THE CAR IS AN ALL-ROUNDER. IT GOES WELL, HANDLES AND STOPS, AND IS STILL GREAT TO DRIVE ON THE ROAD





Andrew says the car will need new carpets one day, but apart from that it is more or less complete



Two-door and left-hand-drive – you don't see many of these on the roads over here

The SR conversion is very, very clean complete with hidden wiring and metallic cover



**IT TOOK FIVE MONTHS TO
GET IMPORT APPROVAL,
ARRANGE FOR PAYMENT AND
FREIGHT FROM THE US**





"The biggest challenge with the car was importing it to Australia. When paying for it in the USA, the seller wanted me to pay 100% up front and he would deliver the car to an importer, but... I found out the seller wasn't the owner. It went pear-shaped for a month or two, and I nearly came to the point where I was going to tell him to shove it up his arse, but Jason from Williams Global Freight came up with a solution, and it all went smoothly from there."

Although it was painted 12 years ago, the car came in for a full rotisserie bare-metal respray, and it shows. The work on the car has held up surprisingly well, with only a repainted bonnet and rear quarter window frames redone to suit.

The SR20 Red Top was already in place from the States, and we all know how much the Yanks love a good SR. Business is booming in the US for Nissan's most beloved four, everything top-shelf used in this build to push power to 335rwhp on pump. It's extremely responsive too, the rear end helping to get the power down and really get the two-door floating down the freeway.



SPECS

ENGINE: S13 2L SR20DET four-cylinder turbo

PERFORMANCE: 335whp

ENGINE HARDWARE: Crank balanced, ARP main studs, Eagle conrods, CP pistons, Tomei 260deg IN 270deg EX camshafts, stainless steel valves, Tomei valvesprings, rocker stoppers and adjustable cam gears, Cosworth metal head gasket, ARP head studs, ported and polished head, rocker covers painted metallic blue, Tomei N2-spec oversized oil pan, Walbro 255L/h in-tank fuel pump, Nismo 740cc injectors, Z32 AFM, TiAL 50mm external wastegate, Nissan Infinity throttlebody, custom TSR intercooler, custom TSR radiator, GReddy pulleys, mandrel-bent 3in stainless steel exhaust with HKS rear muffler, APEXi Power FC engine management system, Garrett GT2871R turbocharger, GReddy dual-stage boost controller

DRIVETRAIN: S13 five-speed gearbox, short-shifter, aluminium flywheel, Nismo twin-plate clutch, Nismo slave cylinder, Nissan R200 with Nismo mechanical LSD centre (3.70), custom CVs and billet axles, Nismo finned rear diff cover

BRAKES/SUSPENSION: 330mm two-piece rotors and Brembo twin-piston calipers, stainless steel braided brake lines and hoses, Wilwood hand-brake, Nissan 280ZX struts with TSR coil-overs front, Cusco adjustable camber tops, Tokico adjustable shocks, 25mm swaybar front and adjustable 19mm swaybar rear, Carrera rear coil-overs, adjustable rear cross-member, adjustable castor rods and steering box brace, Cusco strut brace

WHEELS/TYRES: 17x7.5in front and 17x8.5in rear SSR Professor SP1 wheels, 215/35 tyres

BODYWORK: Datsun 570 light blue respray, front and rear guards rolled, 66-model grille, battery relocated to boot with billet clamp

INTERIOR: Full Auto Meter Phantom gauges (speedo, tach, oil fuel, temp, amps, boost and wideband AFR), half-cage, carbon-fibre Momo steering wheel, custom transmission tunnel, new old stock dash pad, glovebox and door trims, Sparco Milano front seats, re-trimmed rear factory seat, Simpson harnesses



The suspension too is the best of the best and is almost fully adjustable, allowing handling to be dialled in precisely whether it's track work, the street or even just a jaunt down to the local greasy. Brembos add to the quality and are a rather substantial upgrade from what you would have found on the car 12 years ago when it was stripped down.

All considered, Andrew is a happy man. The import process might have seen him lining Panadol's pockets, but now the car is in his hands it's all go. He doesn't have many changes planned. He just wants to sit back and let his family get in on the fun. After all, seats are best found filled.

Thanks: "My wife Deb for helping with all the fiddly things like quarter window seals, etc. and letting me indulge in my passion for all things Datsun, my kids, Jarod who owns an awesome four-door 1600 and is a Datsun nut just like me, and Haylee, who loves getting picked up from school in the Datto and cruising with her dad, Paul at Reef City Customs for the last-minute paint repairs (reefcitycustoms.com.au) and Mercury Motorsport for the awesome tune and arranging the photoshoot." ■



I LIKE EVERYTHING ABOUT THE CAR, BUT THE BEST THING WOULD BE THAT IT'S QUITE RARE IN AUSTRALIA AND THE REACTION IT GETS FROM PEOPLE



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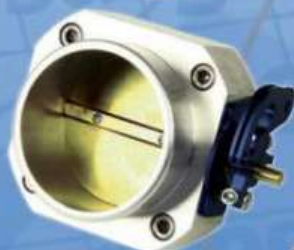


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INSEC



TICIDE



**FORGET WHAT YOU KNOW,
IT'S FAST AND STEADY THAT
WINS THE RACE**

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ERIC TANG



Those are Tarago, as in the van, brakes. It makes sense when you consider how heavy those people-movers are compared to the lightweight Civic

The plates may say SNAIL, but this Civic's far from a slow coach. Ben Robertson, 28, is the owner of the 1978 Honda. Cementing its status as a true grandma mobile is the fact Ben bought it off his nanna. This was, in fact, the first car he ever bought and has since served him well over the last 13 years.

Says Ben, "There is a big story behind this car. My nanna bought it from the production line back in 1976. I bought it from her as my first car because she was dying from cancer. I paid \$800 for it and was stoked I had a car but sad I was losing my nanna. Unfortunately, she passed away later that year.

"The car has been through five builds. It had a little turbo engine swap from a Honda City. I kept putting more stereo gear in it until I couldn't fit in any more. I did that a few times and just kept changing the stereo gear. I turned it into a full SPL DB drag car. My best score was 153.5dB with two DD fifteens. I went crazy with TVs and for some reason ended up having 30 TVs, 10 amps and 10 sets of splits."



Ben is expecting eights from this set-up, so the interior is suitably bare to match

MOST IMPRESSIVE IS THE FACT BEN HAS BUILT 100% OF THE CAR HIMSELF. "EVERY WELD IS MINE," HE SAYS





During this time Ben had another Honda Civic engine getting built, but he started getting over it when it began to take too long. When Ben and his girlfriend moved in together Ben saw that she had a big shed. "I thought, that's it; a 2J in my Civic is what I will do."

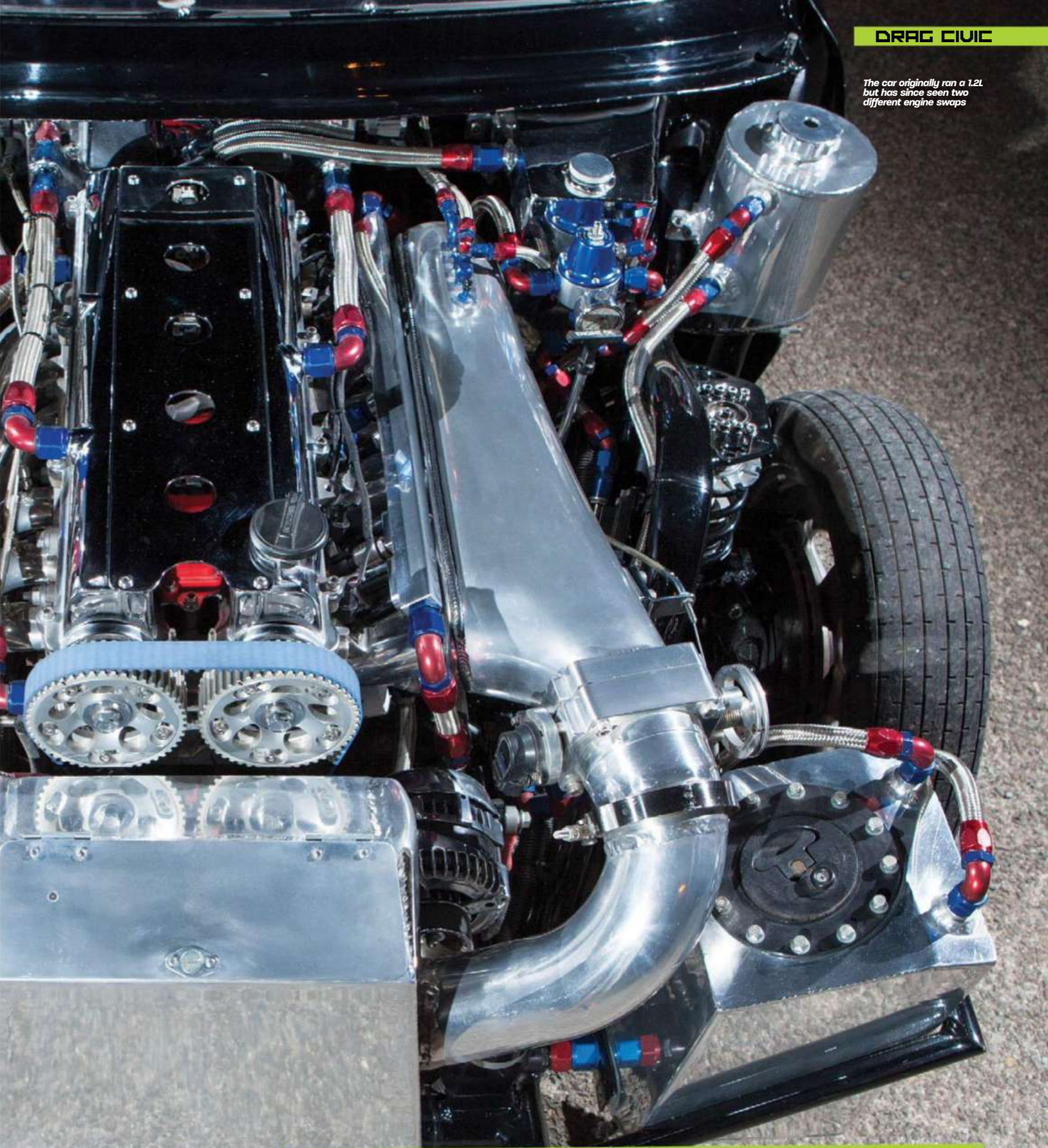
"It has taken me three years to build it into a drag car, but I am finally happy with it. I will change more things as I get into racing, but for now it's what I was trying to build. I will be taking it to the track in the next month or so. I didn't build the car to be a full-on competition drag car. I want a good time, but I'll build a full 10.5 car soon to run into the sixes." Most impressive is the fact Ben has built 100% of the car himself. "Every weld is mine," he says.

Ben's also owned an S2000 and Toyota Aristo, but the Civic's always been on the backburner slowly growing more and more potent with every passing year. The actual build was four years in the making. Ben doesn't know how much he's poured into the project only that it's a significant figure.

According to Ben, the Civic is far from completed yet. There are a stack more modifications to come, so stay tuned... just don't expect to see any more TVs.

Thanks: "Boost In Oz (8250 7081), Stallion Transport (Dad, 8349 9988), Matt Mans Kitchens (Brother, 0400 739 935), Just Toyota Wrecking (8359 4499), my mates Ash Kolstad for painting the car, Jarrod for helping with the car, my missus for putting up with the late nights, Dennis for all the tuning work and a lot of brains" ■

The car originally ran a 1.2L but has since seen two different engine swaps



CEMENTING ITS STATUS AS A TRUE GRANDMA MOBILE IS THE FACT BEN BOUGHT IT OFF HIS NANNA



IT HAS TAKEN ME THREE YEARS TO BUILD IT INTO A DRAG CAR, BUT I AM FINALLY HAPPY WITH IT



SPECS

ENGINE: 3L 2JZ six-cylinder turbo

PERFORMANCE: 410kW (old tune)

ENGINE HARDWARE: Brian Crower camshafts and valvesprings, polished rocker covers, full buckets, no shims, painted sump, drilled out oil pump, Davies Craig water pump, Weldon 2035-A fuel pump, 12 ID 2000cc injectors, Garrett GT4202 turbocharger, Hypertune intake manifold, custom dry ice intercooler, aluminium radiator, EMS engine management system and CDI, Turbosmart eBoost II, Davies Craig oil cooler, EMS touch-screen display, custom exhaust and piping

DRIVETRAIN: Supra box fully built Stage IV MV Automatics internals, 3800rpm stall convertor, HiLux full-spool (3.7), 28-spline shortened axles

SUSPENSION/BRAKES: Tein coil-overs with 90lb springs front, Koni coil-overs rear, custom ladder-bar set-up, Tarago brakes front and rear, Supra master cylinder

WHEELS/TYRES: Weld wheels (22/3.5 F, 28/10 R)

BODYWORK: Super Jet Black (Protec), airbrushed front, full front clip with flared guards

INTERIOR: Kirkey front seat, custom dash, EMS touch-screen, full drag roll-cage, Sparco steering wheel, B&M Pro Ratchet





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TALKING TECH WITH **T.A.** AUTO

**DINO POPS IN TO
SEE A JDM LEGEND**

WORDS AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY DINO DALLE CARBONARE



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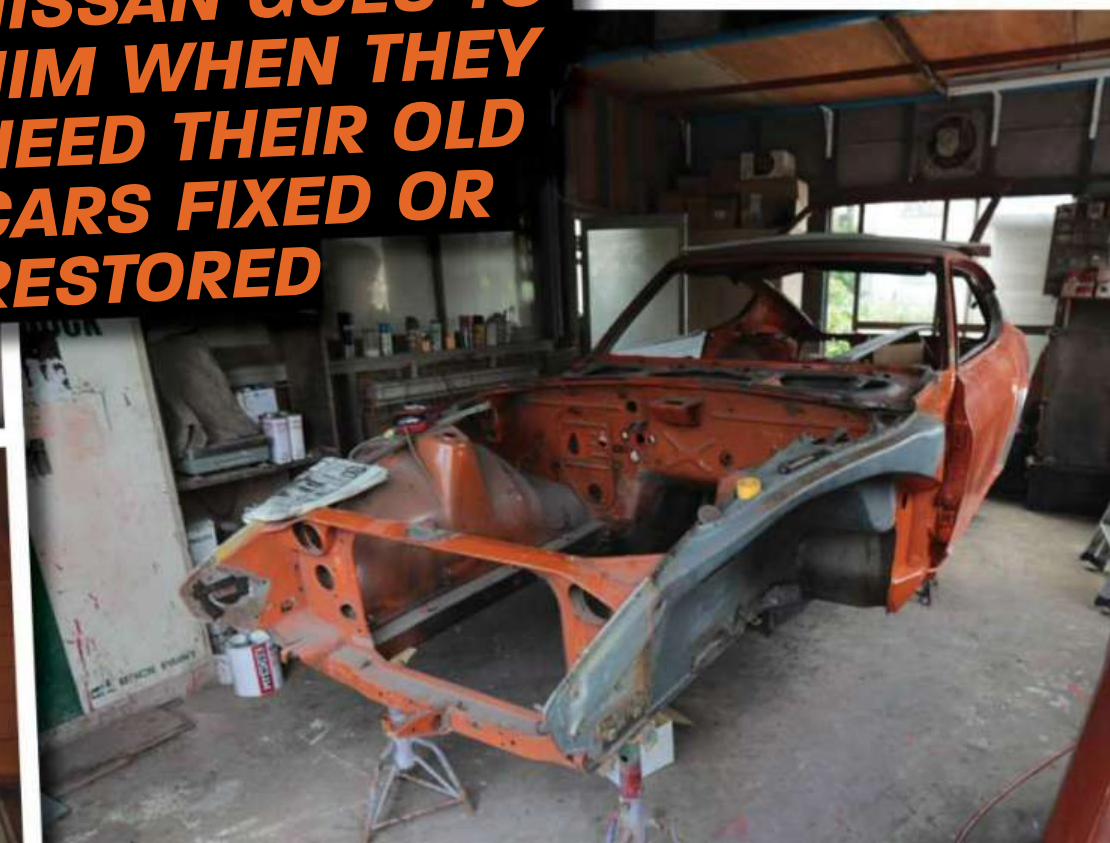
Ando-san is unquestionably one of the most sought-after automotive artisans left in Japan. He's a beautifully humble guy, down to earth in the best possible way, welcoming every time and always up for a good old chat. He lives and breathes his work, and while to the casual observer he may just seem extremely professional, a more adequate description would be that he's at one with what he does.

He's been doing it so long that it's no longer a job, it's a part of life. He gets up in the morning and he's straight at it, walking across his small garden that doubles up as a sort of junk yard, right over to his workshop which he spends all the day and good part of the night in. His wife brings him food and he eats in his little office either by himself or with the odd customer that just drops by for a visit or to check the progress on a restoration.

Ando-san is the definitive Nissan restorer, so respected in the kyushu (classic car) world that even Nissan goes to him when they need their old cars fixed or restored. He only really deals with two models, either the Fairlady Z or the Skyline, and to be more precise almost exclusively the Z432 and the Skyline 2000 GT-R. Both are the pinnacle of each respective model, the GT-R the street version of the race car that saw the Skyline win so many endurance races at Fuji, and the Z432 the most extreme version of the S30 powered by the same 2-litre straight six that powered the GT-R, the S20.



NISSAN GOES TO HIM WHEN THEY NEED THEIR OLD CARS FIXED OR RESTORED







**IF YOU CAN'T DO IT YOURSELF
WITH HAMMERS AND DOLLIES,
YOU SHOULD PROBABLY NOT
CALL YOURSELF A RESTORER**



CHAT WITH THE BOSS ANDO-SAN OF T.A. AUTO



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Very few of these Fairlady's were ever made and only sold in Japan, and out of these 23 'R' versions were created, a lighter version of the car sporting thinner body panels and a more spartan interior.

On our recent visit to T.A. Auto, Ando had two of these cars, one completed and one that was nothing more than a rusty shell.

Q: WHAT ELSE GOES INTO A RESTORATION LIKE THIS?

A: Well, one of the toughest jobs so far was reshaping the contour of the corner here, which like everything I do is strictly done by hand with this metal shaper and various hammers with different contours. I haven't finished yet, as it's a really awkward area to get into, but a few more passes and I'll have a smooth and correctly contoured edge.

You then have to go through the entire car, cut out rusted-out areas and attach on shaped and correctly contoured pieces, spot-weld them in place before laying down a proper bead. Then it's a question of smoothing things out, doing it the way that this kind of work was done back in the old days.

Q: SO YOU ARE AGAINST USING ANY SORT OF MODERN-DAY MACHINES TO SHAPE AND SCULPT METAL?

A: Well back when I started it was frowned upon. If you can't do it yourself with hammers and dollies, you should probably not call yourself a restorer.

Q: HOW LONG DOES A TYPICAL RESTORATION TAKE AND WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU ARE DONE WITH IT?

A: It can take anywhere from half a year to a few years depending on what needs to be done. But around a year, or a year and a bit, is typical. Once I get all the metal work to where it should be, I spend a great deal of time preparing it to paint, because if you just put a year of work into a car, the last thing you want to do is have it look bad after you lay paint over it. So smoothing, putty, more smoothing, more putty – down to when you get the smoothest and most blemish-free surface – then I send the car off to paint.





**EVERYTHING I DO IS STRICTLY
DONE BY HAND WITH THIS METAL
SHAPER AND VARIOUS HAMMERS
WITH DIFFERENT CONTOURS**



Q: SO WHEN NEW CUSTOMERS COME IN WITH RESTORATION REQUESTS, YOU HAVE TO TELL THEM THAT THEY ARE FOR A LONG WAIT I ASSUME?

A: Yes, but they know even beforehand. They expect it. Most people have had their cars for decades, so what's a few more years!

Q: AND YOU WORK ALONE? NOT INTERESTED IN HIRING EXTRA HELP?

A: Yes, it's only me and I like it fine just like this.

Q: IS THIS ORANGE S30 OUTSIDE AN 'R'?

A: Yes and it's one that gets used properly in track. It's nicely set up and runs big Weber carbs and a few little secret mods to the head. The owner has just asked me to fit an FRP bonnet to it as he's had his stock one repaired after it was damaged. He wants to run this now as it's lighter and shaped exactly like the stock one. So I'm just fitting it now. The alignment was a bit of a pain so I had to modify the latch a little to make sit just right.

Q: WHAT'S THAT PUTTY YOU ARE MIXING THERE?

A: This is carbon-fibre putty, you mix it with a hardening compound and it turns rock hard in a few minutes. The bonnet profiles aren't shaped correctly, so I'm adding some material to each corner so that there's a smooth transition from the fenders onto the front bonnet line. Once it's hard I grate the bulk of it off and then slowly shape it and smooth it out. Regular putty follows next and then it's ready to be painted. Job done!

Q: WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOUR OWN CAR BACK HERE? I SEE THE ENGINE HAS BEEN TAKEN OUT?

A: Well I only drive the car on track, so over the last few years it's had a hard life. So I've just pulled the engine and I'm going to give it a refresh before I take it to Sodegaura for the next Skyline and Z meeting.

Q: ARE THERE ANY INTERESTING PROJECTS THAT ARE COMING UP?

A: Yes, right behind here (knocks on one of the shutters outside his shop, before unlocking and lifting it up). The owner of this Skyline GT-R wants a ground up restoration done despite the fact that the body isn't in bad condition. But he wants it done properly.

Should only take a few months and then it can all be built up with all the other parts he's getting restored and fixed up for it. Should be one of the nicest KPGC10s out there.

Q: WELL THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AS EVER, IT'S ALWAYS A PLEASURE TO SIT HERE AND WATCH YOU WORK!

A: My pleasure, next time stay over longer so we can go get a bite to eat!



TECH TALK

Very few of these Fairlady's were ever made and only sold in Japan, and out of these 23 'R' versions were created, a lighter version of the car sporting thinner body panels and a more spartan interior.

On our recent visit to T.A. Auto, Ando had two of these cars, one completed and one that was nothing more than a rusty shell. ■



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Japanese VW Type 3 guru Shin Mukai drives this cool Squareback when visiting So-Cal



Arnie Mohlman (left) reconnected with his Cal Look '67, now owned by Russell Ritchie (right)



Jim Logudice brought his fabulous '67, motivated by a 2.3-litre motor



BUG-IN BUGFEST

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEPHAN SZANTAI

FORTY-SEVEN YEARS AFTER THE FIRST MEET, BUG-IN STILL CAPTURES THE ESSENCE OF CALIFORNIA'S VW SCENE





Outlaw Turbo competitor Tony Ettensperger put on a fantastic show with his quick buggy



Built in the late '70s, Hector Bonilla's '67 from DKP relies on a stout 2386cc motor



Just to be different, this topless Volksrod has been converted to right-hand-drive



Palm trees, American flags, slammed Bugs... Welcome to Garden Grove, California!



The iconic show attracted a large crowd last May; yet, two preceding events made the experience a real blast: a cruise night, along with the 50th Anniversary of the oldest high-performance Volkswagen club in the world!

Talk about a wild saga... After the closure of Orange County International Raceway in 1983, California's Bug-In found itself without a permanent home until 2005, when promoter Rich Kimball revived the event. It first took place at Fontana Raceway, and then moved to Irwindale Speedway for three years (2012-2014), before returning to Fontana again in 2015! Rich had to host his Bug-Ins at Irwindale, as Fontana Raceway experienced a few hiccups, specifically noise complaints from neighbours. The issue was resolved after a two-year hiatus, thanks to an expensive wall that exceeds the quarter-mile length of the track.

The return of Bug-In back in '05 truly enthused the West Coast's Volkswagen players. This meet, the 32nd since 1968, managed to capture some of the essence

of the original events, helped by various exceptional displays: old VW gassers, land speed record cars, Bug-In memorabilia... A decade forward, special exhibits have disappeared from the programme (sadly some will argue); yet the show itself remains one of the largest in Southern California, still attracting visitors from all over the world. They typically travel to So-Cal not only for Bug-In, but also for other VW-related affairs that precede it.

This year, many were lured by an exceptional event organized on Saturday: the 50th Anniversary of Der Kleiner Panzers club. What a day! DKP is the oldest performance-oriented VW club in the world and the group is still going strong, with over 30 members – most Bugs and Karmann Ghias in the club run the quarter-mile in the 11-, 12- and 13-second brackets.

More weekend festivities included Friday's DKP Cruise Night in Garden Grove, as seen in this article's sidebar. With the "California Look" trend playing such a key role in both these get-togethers, members of prominent European high-performance Volkswagen clubs made sure to join the action, too.



CALI VW SHOW SCENE

Alex Guerdat's excellent '65 Westfalia



Funky yet well built, this military-themed truck featured great proportions with its chopped top



Nice stance, eh? James Harris' 1965 Notch sits on airbags and 18-inch rims



Simply the best: Dave Galass's supercharged '62 Beetle now features a clear deck lid!

Dean Kirsten of HotVWs Magazine (wearing a 1981 Bug-In shirt) hard at work...

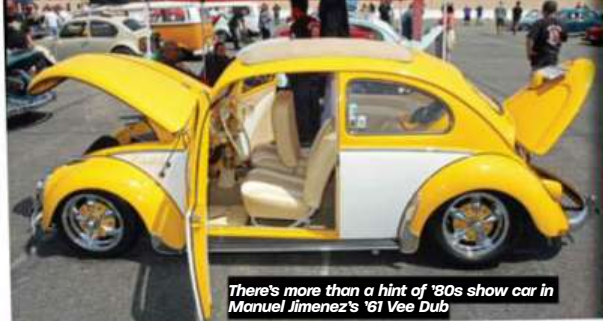


Beautiful Cal Look '67 from DKK club was for sale - 35,000 Dollars



Hobi Oseguera competes with one of the most colourful drag Bugs - it incidentally runs an automatic gearbox





There's more than a hint of '80s show car in Manuel Jimenez's '61 Vee Dub



The Hefler & Sons gasser made a rather hairy pass, not lifting the throttle at any point



The Manx Buggy Club had undoubtedly one of the most impressive displays at the show



Paul Davis' 1963 Variant runs unusual vintage 4.5Jx15 ICMP rims from Japan



Enjoy Coca Cola! Louie Rodiles certainly does with his '66 Beetle



Shortened wheelbase and mega turbo engine... Now this Single Cab must be a handful to drive!



Posting a 13.75, Kathie Craig won the Powder Puff class, which welcomed 25 lady-racers



Crunchy! Check out the lower sills on this early Bus fitted with Rader-style rims



Baja Bugs have a number of devotees in So-Cal - this '71 example belongs to Sal Baptista



Artist Tim Leventry unearthed dozens of ancient VW paint cans - so cool!



The ex-Arnie Mohlman '67, still looking good parked with the DKP gang



A Bug-In winner back in the early '80s, Phil Valadez's '57 still looks as good as ever

This year's Bug-In 40 followed a layout typical of American Vee Dub events, with a car show, a vendors' village and a racers' pit - all three lined up along the racetrack - in addition to a swap meet. In its previous incarnations at Fontana Raceway, Bug-In suffered from the car show being held in a separate section, detached from the dragstrip area. Rich and his son Andy addressed the issue by changing the layout, making it more compact in essence. It worked great, though some complained about the lack of beautiful line-ups in the car show itself - think of early Bugs in one row followed by Karmann Ghias etc. as seen in the past. Volkswagens were simply displayed on a first-come-first-serve basis as you will immediately notice from the pictures.

Highlights in this vicinity included a group of Manx buggies, all parked together. Scottish VW collector Russell Ritchie also sent one of his vehicles to California just for the weekend! He appropriately selected the ex-Arnie Mohlman '67 sedan, "The Last Surviving Original DKP 1st Generation Cal Look Car". As you would expect, it was prominently exhibited with the rest of the Der Kleiner Panzers troupe!



The handmade Wild Turkey '62 Baja has not changed since it appeared in HotVWs in '77!



Famous automotive journalist Pat "Too Tall" Ganahl drove his Oval to Bug-In



After a long hiatus, the Renn K fer Cup (lined up to the left) is back!



Miguel Ruiz has elected a set of uncommon Randa wheels for his turbocharged '59 Ragtop



Talk about great entertainment, that's Alex Sotelo's awesome turbocharged Bay Window!



Attractive Steiner-style rims are being used more often in California



Styled after the California Look, but running like a drag car: Scott Bakken's Sepia Brown sedan!



We love watching the mega-detailed 10.42-second '67 of DKP member Allen Wiess

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THE **BEST**



- OR **NOTHING**

WORDS BY PAUL COWLAND
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHRIS WALLBANK

**WE CATCH UP WITH THE
GLOUCESTERSHIRE UBER-TUNERS
AS THEY UNVEIL THEIR LATEST
1200BHP MEISTERWERK**





BENEATH THAT PERFECTLY FORMED CARBON FIBRE BONNET ARE SOME 1200 RAMPAGING HORSES

As anyone who has ever speed-dated will know; there's a real truth in the phrase, 'like attracts like'. Although the old adage of 'opposites attract' may work for the odd random pairing, for most people, in nearly all situations, they tend to gravitate towards others that think and act the way that they do - and nowhere is this maxim more true than in the world of tuning. Don't believe me? Then can you imagine a discerning, anally retentive detail freak leaving their pride and joy with a specialist that displays none of those qualities? No, me neither.

As the diametric opposite of that example, Litchfield sits very happily at the top table of global tuners, not only for its trademark Subaru and GT-R conversions, but also for its sterling work on some of the nicest – and rarest – supercars to be housed in Europe. Building a reputation like this doesn't come easy, and in Litchfield's case, it has taken founder Iain and his wife Jenny, along with a dedicated technical team, over 15 years to garner and retain their exclusive clientele, mainly by a refusal to ever entertain the average, creating conversions and vehicles that have pushed far beyond the parameters ever imagined by the vehicle's original creators.

This single-mindedness and dogged pursuit of perfection hasn't just bought them accolades and trophies (which it has by the way... lots). But, more importantly, it has endeared them to customers of a certain persuasion. Those that wish to build the very best machine commercially available – where price comes a solid fourth after quality, execution and efficacy. This stunning white GT-R, owned by a gentleman who would rather stay anonymous for the time being, is the perfect exemplum of the case in point.





"This client was very typical of many of our customers," smiles Iain. "He came to us with a very clear remit of creating a car with big power that still retained all of its GT creature comforts and functionality. Many of our customers refuse to compromise with their builds. They want a stunningly quick car, but not at the expense of the driving experience. It's not easy to achieve, but with careful preparation, and the choice of the right components, it's something we've become somewhat adept at delivering."

The car had already been specified with the Varis body mods – which we will revisit later on – but what truly makes this car is remarkable is the drivetrain. Beneath that perfectly formed carbon fibre bonnet are some 1200 rampaging horses. Angry when they're wanted, and docile and traffic-friendly when they're not. But just how do you make a GT-R engine do that?

The answer come by mentioning that really, there isn't an awful lot of GT-R engine left in this car. Sure, the architecture is still the same, but almost every key component has been re-imagined and re-engineered in some way. Let's start with the displacement; this one almost joins the muscle car ranks with a hefty 4.6 litre displacement. Running under the evidently titled VR46 nomenclature, this is a long way from what the factory had in mind. The conversion starts with a fresh VR38 block of course, but then Litchfield's engineers completely refashion both oil and waterways before the block is completely restrengthened. This work is done by Capricorn – yes the very same engineering concern that consults to many major manufacturers and blue-chip race teams – right up to the very highest level – and was instrumental in much of the pre-production testing of the factory GT-R over at the Nürburgring. Once the block has had its F1-level massage, it heads back to the Litchfield workshops for line boring.

The next stage in this incredible engine is the intake

system. The standard plenums may be fine for the standard engine, but on this car, they simply wouldn't be able to match the aerobic capacity of the engine. Litchfield's clever and somewhat surgical solution is to open up the standard parts before completely reworking their internals to deliver greater flow. Once flawlessly fused back together – and then tastefully finished in a 'factory fresh' crackle finish, you'd never know that the Litchfield team has been at work.

"Material and component choice is crucial on an engine of this spec," Iain continues. "We believe that a high-horsepower motor can be made to be almost as reliable as a factory unit, as long as it's built with carefully selected upgrades." Proving his point are the beautifully finished Inconel manifolds, flawlessly Zircotec coated to minimise heat transfer. It's not just what's fitted of course, but how it's tested. All of these parts have undergone the kind of flow testing usually only reserved for the rarefied air of the F1 paddock. It's typical of Litchfield's approach to every engineering problem. "When we're testing, we always strive to use the best solution commercially available," Iain intones seriously. "Naturally, it's usually in the sphere of F1, but luckily we have a few friends there that look after us, so it means we can put all of our components through those very same processes. It's not cheap, but it does give incredibly effective results."

Another example of this 'trickle-down' thinking comes in the form of the gasket material. Rather than the usual laser-cut steel, or stamped alternative, the gasket material that Litchfield uses on these engines features a gas-type seal which expands when heated, giving an impervious

sealing surface between the block and the head.

Overkill? Possibly, but when you remember that this car has a greater power output than most racecars, it's not surprising to see that level of technology at play.

From an engineering perspective, everything on this car has been tailored. The turbos for example; starting with the highly desirable Garrett GT30R units, even these were re-worked with TiAL housings and a brace or 76mm custom compressor wheels. Litchfield's own custom intercooler, allied to a Forge transmission cooler take care of controlling excess heat with a great degree of success. Litchfield also massively over-engineered the fuelling system too, including the comically named 'Battleship' fuel pump conversion, which provides more than enough super unleaded from tank to injectors. When you stop to examine the numbers, you can see why it's all needed though; 1,200hp is available from a boost of 1.7bar (25psi) and at only 7,200rpm. That's the '11' setting however, so there's also a mere 918hp available at 1.1bar (16psi) in case you want to sit back and take things easy on the run into work... Either way, that's going to slurp some gas along the way!

Coping with all of this is a gearbox and transmission package that sees almost every component being uprated. Inside the Nissan GR6 dual-clutch transmission a Dodson Motorsport 6-speed gear set (standard gearing with overdrive 6th) powers through a Dodson Motorsport clutch



pack, with standard final drive. The front diff is a Litchfield/Quaife item, while the centre unit also receives a sizeable makeover to keep it all hanging together.

Despite its hard-won reputation for GT-R engine-building, many forget that Litchfield has also been pushing the boundaries of suspension development too, working with the original creators of the Nissan's chassis components in order to produce something that not only integrated with the factory damper control systems, but offered a great degree more body control in the process. The resultant solution, engineered at factory level with both BILSTEIN and Eibach has become the tuning-scene benchmark for this car now, with literally hundreds of cars having been upgraded to benefit from it. Needless to say, this car has the whole kit. This level of engineering does reveal much about the Litchfield modus operandi. If you can't find the part you need for your conversion in the aftermarket – simply go to the appropriate OEM supplier and develop it further yourself. A great example of how Litchfield innovates, rather than imitates, to keep pushing its packages forward.



Although best engineering practise is only ever really one true course, when it comes to aesthetics, Litchfield is keen to let customers choose their own path of perfection. In this instance, the gentleman concerned clearly went heavy on the mouse clicks whilst browsing the Varis website – with the end result looking all the better for it. The front bumper, lip and side skirts all look fantastic, and are perfectly augmented by the 2015-spec OEM rear lights and AMS carbon fibre roof, which picks up a couple of light-and-shade styling cues from the original panels. Tying these new parts together well are the 20-inch ADV.1 wheels, which balance a clearly more aggressive appearance, but without looking like overkill. A tough trick to pull off, but one that works well here. Behind these rims sit a suitably-uprated brace of 400mm Alcon brakes, allied to Litchfield's own bespoke ducts to direct as much cold air their way as possible – useful when you're trying to slow this heavyweight 1650kg machine from significant three-figure speeds.

Although the chassis CV might very well scream 'racecar', when it comes to the interior, it's all very

civilised, with a clear hat-tip to the owner's desire to create a truly versatile GT machine. A factory steering wheel sits front and centre of the pilot, leaving all of its party tricks in place, but with the added bonus of an Alcantara covering for better purchase. Notice also how the gear paddle selectors are extended for easier reach during those track-day wheel twirling moments, too.

As for the rest of it, it's the full-weight (and therefore full comfort and refinement) factory interior still in situ, complete with all of the original sound deadening and top-flight Bose stereo to make for cossetting progress. Sitting in this thing at speed is eerie; it's almost too civilised. You simply don't expect this much power and weight to make such unflustered progress on a tight back road. It is truly a masterpiece cocktail of parts and performance; ticking every single box in one car.

I've driven and written about a lot of Litchfield GT-R conversions now. Each and every one is very different, reflecting the nature and personality of its owner, and their tastes and desires. What is a common on all of these cars however is how each one very

much is greater than the sum of its parts. Read the box out spec sheet, and you can't help to be impressed; these cars are built with literally the best of everything. What that 'Top Trumps' list can't tell you however is just how well each part works together. It is ultimately this level of engineering homogeneity that makes this car so good, because although every line of that spec sheet screams 'animal', the reality is anything but.

Sure, this is a car that can almost jump the space-time continuum and rearrange crucial body parts in the process, but day-to-day it still retains the credentials that make the GT-R such a capable showroom machine. Creating a conversion like this is never easy - or cheap, for that matter – but when the resulting car looks and drives as well as this, then you realise that as long as there are enthusiasts looking to acquire the very best vehicle available – and talented teams like Litchfield to help them to achieve it, then the future of the Nissan tuning scene looks very healthy indeed. ■

CONTACTS:

www.litchfieldmotors.com



SPECS

MAX POWER: 1200hp @ 7,200rpm (1.7bar), Max Torque: 850lb/ft @ 3,800rpm (1.5bar), Peak Boost: 1.8bar (26.5psi), Weight: 1,650kg, Launch RPM: 3,600rpm, Shift RPM: 7,600rpm, Redline: 7,900rpm, Fuel: Shell V-Power 99RON

ENGINE: VR46 4.6L Litchfield Red Top engine, oil and water path modification, complete block machining with replacement liners, liners Niksil coated, block work by Capricorn (UK), line bored in-house at Litchfield, Litchfield/Capricorn pistons with custom crown design, Litchfield/Arrow connecting rods, super-finished/balanced custom crank, Litchfield Sport camshafts, Litchfield custom springs with larger valves, custom head gasket, standard Nissan head studs, ARP main studs, Litchfield large intake manifold, Litchfield air intake kit, ASNU 1,100cc injectors, Litchfield 'Battleship' fuel pump conversion, Syvecs Motorsport S8 ECU, Nissan standard ignition system, NGK Racing plugs, Litchfield Inconel manifold with Zircotec coating, Litchfield 102mm exhaust system, 46mm external dump valves, Forge Motorsport blow-off valves, Litchfield large race core intercooler, Litchfield blue-printed oil pump & oil cooler, standard fuel cell, Garrett GT30R based turbos, 76mm custom compressor wheels, TiAL turbine housings, Akrapovič carbon tail pipe trims

TRANSMISSION: Nissan GR6 dual-clutch transmission, Dodson Motorsport 6-speed gear set (standard gearing with overdrive 6th), Dodson Motorsport clutch pack, standard final drive, Litchfield/Quaife front diff, Litchfield modified centre diff, standard Nissan rear LSD, Forge Motorsport transmission cooler, standard driveshafts

SUSPENSION/BRAKES: Litchfield/Bilstein dampers, Litchfield/Eibach springs, Litchfield custom anti-roll bar, Alcon Superkit CNC brake calipers, Alcon 400mm rotors (fronts), Pagid pads, Alcon brake lines, Litchfield brake cooling ducts

Wheels/Tyres: ADV.1 20-inch wheels, Michelin Pilot Cup2 tyres

EXTERIOR: Varis Front bumper, lip & grille, carbon fibre GT bonnet, Varis side skirts, AMS carbon roof, carbon boot lid, Aeromotive Active rear spoiler, MY2015 GT-R rear lenses

INTERIOR: Quick-release Litchfield Alcantara steering wheel with longer custom gear selectors, Toucan digital display





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450HP AND ONE VERY CRANKY ROTOR

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ERIC TANG







This 1974 RX-2 Capella has certainly had a long life as far as cars go, but you wouldn't know it looking over the panels now. It's all thanks to owner and business owner Rod Hogger (40), a member of Central Coast Rotaries and also a giant Wankel fan.

"I always wanted a rotary that had these taillights," he told us. "I built this for street and strip, especially Powercruise." In the past Rod's piloted a MkII Escort with no power and a supercharged 1980 HiLux with V6, but the Capella marked a new era in his performance pedigree. It had to make power — lots of it. Two-and-a-half years it took of solid toil, but how Rod came to be with the Capella in the first place is pretty damn intriguing in and of itself.

This is a genuine barn find. "I wasn't actively looking," continues Rod, "but this was exactly what I wanted. I heard of this car sitting in a shed. The father of the owner wanted his shed back after five years of it sitting there. When I first looked at it, it was up on easy jacks with an interior full of rubbish, smashed windscreen and swear words scratched into the front guards all thanks to a previous girlfriend."

"It didn't start. The lights and blinkers didn't work. It also had a big hole cut in the bonnet for the 'air cleaner.'" The owner was asking way too much, so Rod told his dad he'd pay half of the figure. One week later the deal was done. The dad even loaned Rod his trailer to tow it.

The fuel tank was rusty and the fuel pumps dead. Rod found a tank in Bathurst in an old rusty car in a paddock full of race fuel and perfect inside. A quick paintjob and a new Carter Gold pump and the rotor now had fuel.

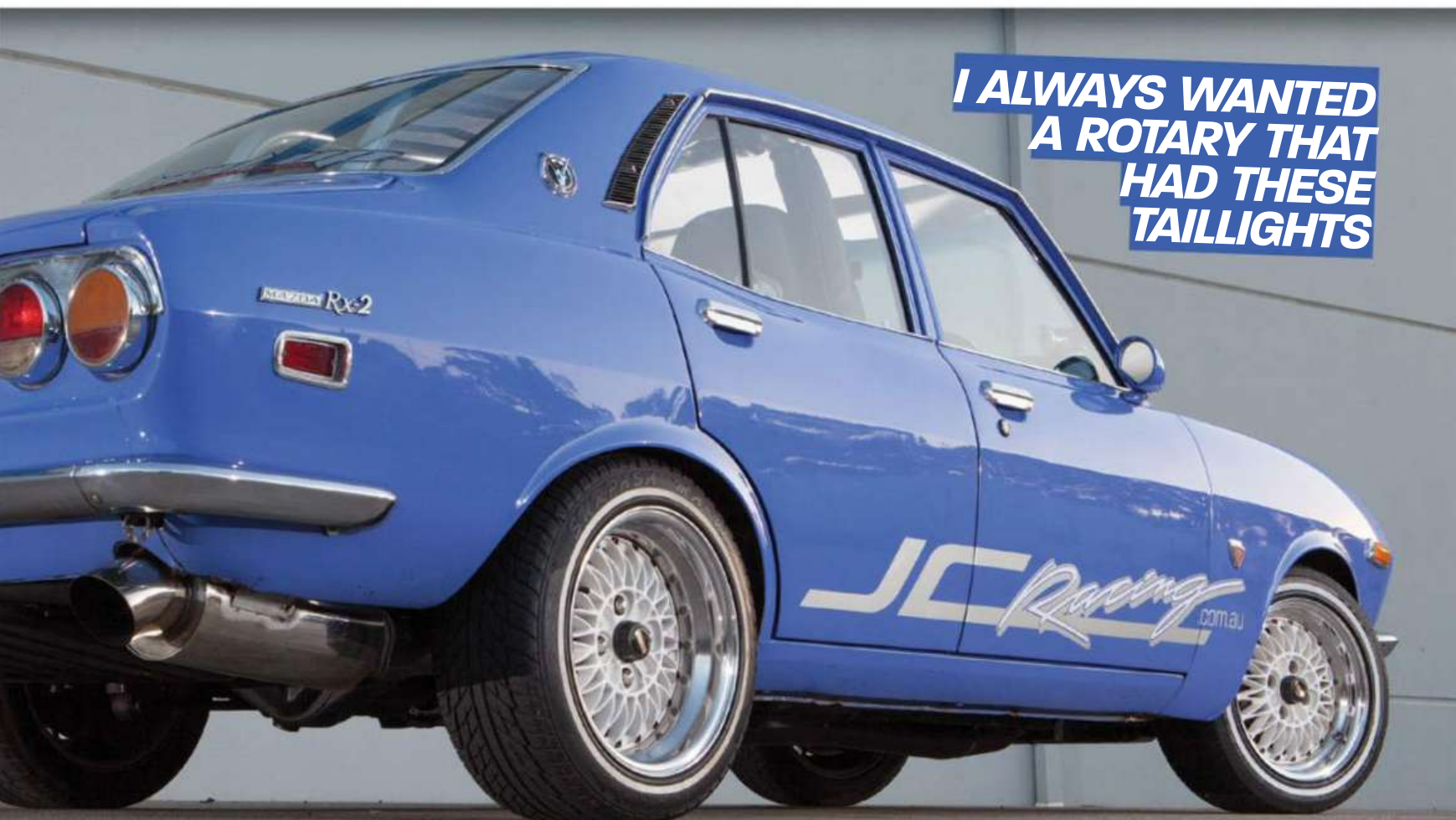
"The Supra five-speed sounded like it was internally eating itself. A quick pull-down with new synchros and second gear and we thought we were on easy street. We put in a new Exedy clutch and whacked it back in. The adaptor plate between the box and block had washers at every bolt connection, which we found odd, so we put it all back together and fired it up, but couldn't get gears."

The guys soon worked out the adaptor plate was too thin and the input shaft was in contact with the eccentric shaft, so the box came out again to be stripped down and fixed. While it was on the hoist, Rod replaced every bush on the car — the best and cheapest job he did all build. The car drove 100% better.

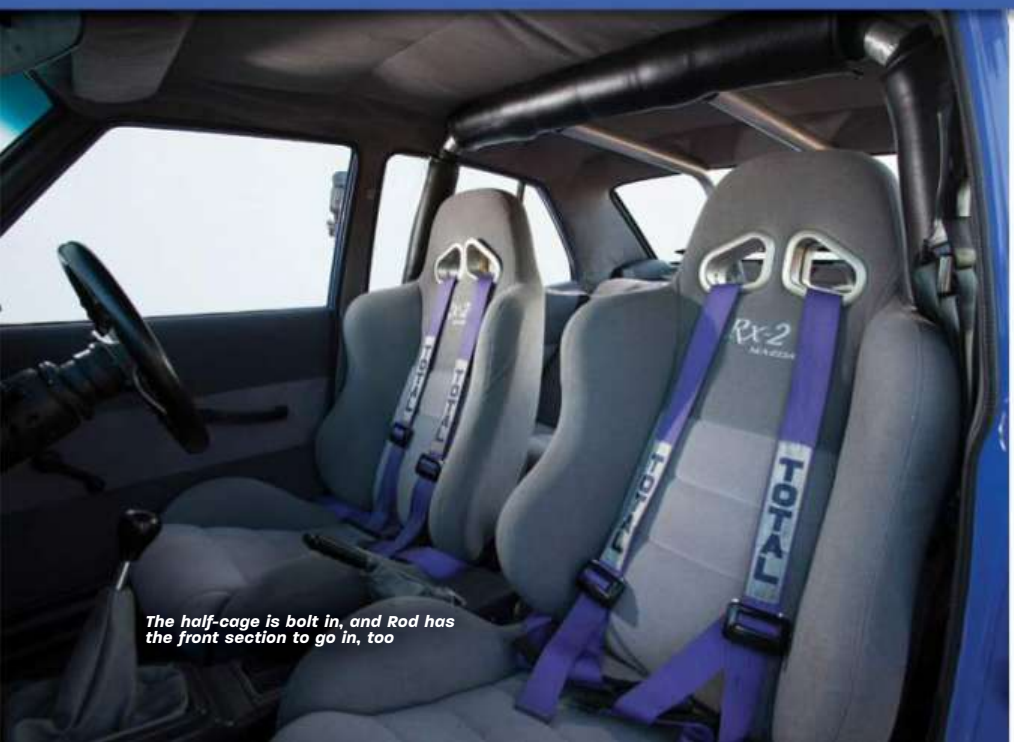


When Rod pulled the car out of the shed initially it had swear words scratched into the paint, had a smashed windscreen and was missing badges. Not any more...





**I ALWAYS WANTED
A ROTARY THAT
HAD THESE
TAILLIGHTS**



The half-cage is bolt in, and Rod has the front section to go in, too





WHEN I FIRST LOOKED AT IT, IT HAD AN INTERIOR FULL OF RUBBISH, SMASHED WINDSCREEN AND SWEAR WORDS SCRATCHED INTO THE FRONT GUARDS



SPECS

ENGINE: 13B bridgeport turbo

PERFORMANCE: 450hp

ENGINE HARDWARE: Series V housings and rotors, JCR seals, bridgeported, RX-2 reversed sump, 1000cc Bosch blue injectors, T04 turbocharger, PWR radiator, intercooler and coolers, 3in custom exhaust system with Vorex, Microtech LT-10s engine management system, Series V RX-7 intake manifold, two Bosch 044 fuel pumps, Bosch coils, JC Racing custom wiring

DRIVETRAIN: Supra five-speed gearbox, brass-button clutch, HiLux 4:11 diff

SUSPENSION/BRAKES: Coil-overs, HSV discs front, Patrol master cylinder, HiLux drum brakes rear

WHEELS/TYRES: 15in Simmons V105 wheels, various tyres

BODYWORK: Custom respray

INTERIOR: Re-trimmed race seats front and regular seat rear in velour, five-speed shifter, Auto Meter gauges, Microtech display, bolt-in half cage, Autotecnica steering wheel, Clarion DVD head unit, 6x9in rear speakers and 12in subwoofer



"JC Racing converted it from N/A to turbo, painted the engine bay, front guards and found me a new bonnet, rebuilt the engine and cleaned up the wiring. Stitched Up Custom Trim re-trimmed the existing front race seats and freshened up the rear seat complete with RX-2 logos. They also took my dash pad and vacuum-formed new vinyl onto it. You see so many cracked dashes and I believe this is a real focal point. It just needs to be done."

Rod found the rear beaver panel on the back seat of the car under all the rubbish. It had been re-chromed and never put back on. He also found all of the missing badges online, some original and some reproduction. "The under-dash parcel tray was a real find. Not many have survived leaking windows and age. This one was almost in mint condition from a local trader on the Central Coast."

Looking back over it all now, Rod reckons it probably would have been cheaper to buy a car completely finished from the get-go, but he's done now and doesn't even want to think about how much he's poured into his pride-and-joy here, suffice to say it's a lot more than a trip to the pokies.

Moving on, Rod is looking at a new interior and sound system. The turbo might also be upgraded to a Precision or HKS unit for more power and response, because hey, there's no such thing as 'enough'.

Thanks: JC Racing, Monster Car Audio, Stitched up Custom Trimming ■



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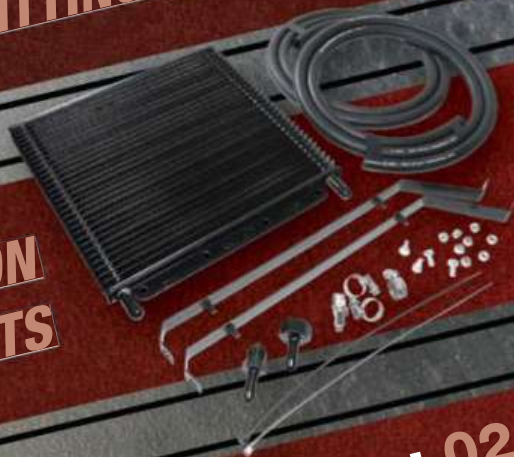
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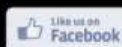


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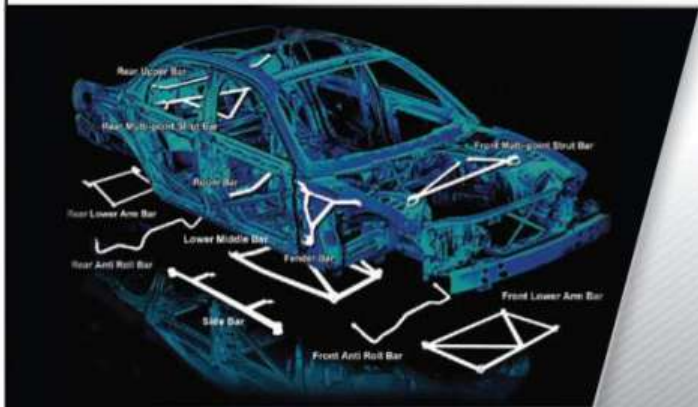
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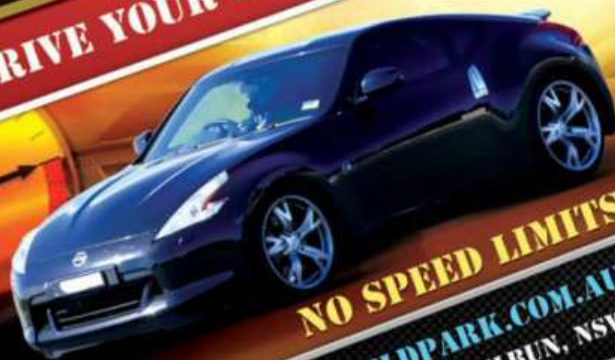
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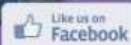


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